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Interview; Frank Primerano; 05-05-1994

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Frank Primerano

Mr. Primerano was a member of Local 43 (White) of the American Federation of Musicians, Buffalo, New York. He invited me to his home, Buffalo, New York, on May 5, 1994 for an interview.

Q: Okay, Your full name, sir?

P: Frank Primerano.

Q: No middle name?

P: No, sir.

Q: Your date of birth?

P: 2/5/26.

Q: 2/5/26. And where were you born?

P: Buffalo.

Q: And raised in Buffalo, as well?

P: Mostly, yeah, mostly. I studied a bit in New York years ago and traveled a lot with bands.

Q: Uh huh.

P: In the early years and, uh, but basically Buffalo has been my home.

Q: Your education all here in Buffalo, or elsewhere?

P: Yeah, yeah, mostly. Well, I studied in Chicago and I studied in New York.

Q: What schools? The names.

P: Not, not schools. Chautauqua Institute. Down there studied privately, and, you know, uh, studied privately in New York with Fred Zimmerman.

Q: And Fred Zimmerman?

P: Bass teacher. Was a writer. Use to write a lot of, compose a lot of, not compose music, but he use to edit a lot of music for...to be performed on the string base.

- Q: Did you attend the, uh, any of the university's here in, uh, the Buffalo area?
- P: Well, the University of Buffalo and Buff State.
- Q: Is that right? And degrees received?
- P: Yeah, I have a B.A. from Buff State. Yeah.
- Q: Alright. Well I'm going to [Tape Indescribable] fine institution, myself. Now has music always been your occupation?
- P: Yes.
- Q: Always has been. Uh, how old did you start right out of college?
- P: No, I went to college at a much later year, years. In the '60s I started, and I went to college to get my degree. My parents could not afford to send me to college. I graduated high school in 1943 at the age of 17, and I joined the Musicians' Association.
- Q: Local 43.
- P: 43 and...
- Q: Here in Buffalo, and...
- P: Yeah, and started working...
- Q: With what band? Was it the Philharmonic?
- P: Uh, no not in '43. I played at the, uh, Chez Ami, The Town Casino--they were nightclubs in this area. Played in the show bands, and so forth.
- Q: What kind of music did these early bands that you belonged to play?
- P: Well, they accompanied singers, the pop singers of the day in those times.
- Q: Names? Names? Do you remember some of them?
- P: Oh, Patti Page, Tony Bennett, uh.
- Q: Wow!
- P: ...all those, uh...

- Q: _____ big names...
- P: Yeah, yeah.
- Q: ...that came through Buffalo.
- P: Sammy Davis was one that performed here, and, uh, there was many of the big stars...Jack Benny, and those, those people, there, there. We, you know, we played background music for them and things like...Some of them would sing with the band and others would just tell jokes, and whatever.
- Q: When did you start getting involved as an administrator with the Union?
- P: Uh, well, I, uh...In the early years of the, uh, Buffalo Philharmonic, I, uh, was one of the, uh, primary people that formed the, what we call, the Orchestra Committee, which represented members of the Buffalo Philharmonic, and we use to be like a liaison group between the Union and the society, and, and...From there it was decided I should run for office so I could have that link right in the Union.
- Q: What year are we talking about?
- P: 1968.
- Q: So what was your...
- P: That's the year I got elected. I think prior to that I ran a term and didn't get elected to office. And then I did get elected in 1968.
- Q: See, I was under the impression, maybe its because I just assumed from having talked with you, that you were an officer prior to 1968, but it wasn't until 1968. That's what you're telling me?
- P: Yeah, yeah.
- Q: That you became an officer. What office did you hold?
- P: I was on the Executive Board.
- Q: As the...
- P: Uh, member, member...
- Q: President?

P: No, no! Member of the Executive Board.

Q: Okay.

P: ...Board.

Q: I understand. I understand. So from '68...

P: And that was, uh...In fact, as I think I, as I recalled telling you on the telephone our very first meeting, there were three of us that sort of ran as a ticket, but we ran together. We were close friends, both musically and politically, and we ran for office, and then as we got sworn in. At that particular time, is when we were informed that there was a merger negotiation, that there were merger negotiations going on.

Q: With 533. Tell me about that whole story. That's, that...We talked about it over the phone, but just for the record.

P: Yeah.

Q: Tell me about that.

P: And, uh, well the very, uh, _____, after we had been sworn in as officers, the president, uh, I think at the time was, uh, Salvatore Rizzo, he said there's, oh I'm not sure of the exact dates, I think _____ the installation of officers was around January 3 of 1968, I believe. And, uh, he said there's a merger meeting on, uh, the 6th, maybe that close period of time. At that point, the three of us were not...We had no information as to these meetings going. They had been going on for a year, and we weren't even informed. Our membership was not informed that these negotiation meetings were going on between the two Locals. And, uh, that's how we got to be involved in it. Then, of course, at that point we wanted to know all the, uh, have copies of the minutes of what's been going on. Whether they've been to, and they had agreed to a lot of things, you know, in principle, and, but, as I think I informed before, it had to go through our membership for ratification. It had to go to 533's membership for ratification.

Q: Do you remember some of these, uh, because I think I recall from our telephone conversation, that 43 wasn't happy. The new Executive Board that was sworn in, in '60 as well as the general body of 43...

P: Well, they were.

Q: You all weren't happy about this?

P: No, we...Well, one of the things we weren't happy about is the fact that, uh, why did the previous officers keep this a secret from its membership. You know, like, uh, still I don't understand it.

Q: There's...Can't figure out why they did?

P: No. That was not in the best interest of getting anything resolved and anything agreed to if you're, if you're holding back information and things, and, and, uh...So we went into meetings, and they were pretty much set to go to the general membership for...to ratify this agreement that they had agreed to, and, and, it was something that the new members of the Executive Board did not agree to.

Q: And what were some of these things? Do you remember?

P: Some of these things were the salaries for almost like a double, uh, uh, set of officers in principle.

Q: I've heard that before.

P: Yeah, and, uh, the work dues, which Local 43 did not have a work dues.

Q: The Work Dues.

P: Yeah.

Q: 533.

P: Well, you can't call it a tax because it's illegal to. So you're talking about, uh, work dues they call it, which basically we know really amounts to a tax, but you, they call it work dues. That was, uh, in the amount of four percent...

Q: Yes, sir.

P: ...to fund all these, uh, salaries that they were proposing. The amounts of the salaries, I don't really recall, but at that time they seemed like an awful lot.

Q: Anything else that didn't settle well with 43 in this merger? Not only were you informed that there were negotiations on, but you were slapped with a, a merger agreement that, uh, that they wanted ratified.

P: Yeah.

- Q: That they had been negotiating for a year. Am I correct?
- P: Yeah, yeah.
- Q: Do you remember any other stipulations that didn't settle well with you all, the new folks that were coming into...
- P: Well, I think...
- Q: ...the office?
- P: Well, I think basically, uh, uh, uh, it was the, the fact that the work dues were going to finance all these salaries of, uh, officers, in which, there was, I don't know, something like, uh, maybe some 13 or 15 officers that were going...
- Q: Hmm.
- P: ...to be involved in this thing.
- Q: What I don't understand, and correct me if I'm wrong, what I've heard is that in it was this work dues that kept 533 in the black, and from what I heard through the tree, is that 43 was in red. So why not incorporate this work dues if you needed help?
- P: I don't think, I could be wrong, but I don't think that, uh, Local 43 was in the red, in those days. They were in the black. We had, we had a large membership that well, once we got in office, we incorporated and got people that belonged to the surrounding little locals here, and they were actually suppose to belong to Buffalo, and through the efforts of the new officers, we made them join our Local here. I mean we were, we were fairly healthy in those days.
- Q: Hmm...So it's because...
- P: But, uh, I don't say that, uh, the, uh, 533 was in the black because when they did finally merge, there wasn't many funds or anything that they turned over to us. They had their little corporation, you know, that Club that they still own, but, uh, that maybe itself was in the black, but the Local itself was not in the black only because when they merged, uh, all the assets and everything were suppose to be incorporated into one local, which was 92 and that, that didn't happen of anything, of any consequence.
- Q: I heard that they just brought furniture.

P: Yeah. Furniture that was really...Uh...

Q: That's about it.

P: Yeah, that's to my knowledge.

Q: So...

P: So I can't say that they were in the black, you know, like their maybe their corporation was that Club, and everything, which it was researched and everything, and they legally had, uh, uh, this thing, uh, uh, established at the, uh, county, or whatever the hell they, uh, filed, you know, and they had, they had the...This corporation was on file as being the, truly the, that's when they called it the Colored Musicians' Association for many years, and maybe it still exists under that name.

Q: Tell me about the Statler Meeting. You're famous for that.

P: Yeah.

Q: Tell me a little about it.

P: Well, the Statler Meeting was, uh, probably the largest meeting we've ever had, at least in my knowledge, you know. Uh, some, over some maybe, I think that thing was 404 members in attendance, which is a lot for a union to have in attendance. You would like, and it still doesn't exist, you would like to see all of your membership participate in everything because the union is healthier when everybody takes a, any organization is healthy when every last person contributes to it, you know, to the success of that organization and this didn't. Uh, so this was probably was the largest one they had. This, uh, this Terrace Room of the Statler, which seats some 6-700 people they could. And they had this membership, and it when on hacking and, of course, our membership displayed that they weren't happy with what they were hearing because the proposed, uh, merger was presented to them by the AF of L, which was healthy. This, uh, then was the vice president of the American Federation of Musicians, who later became president, but he was in charge of the negotiations with a Victor Fuentealba who became a, uh, ah, president also of the American Federation of Musicians and Alan Wood who was vice president in charge of Canada. They were the principal people involved in the negotiations representing the AF of L. I don't think that anytime that we ah, uh, were really objecting to the fact that we were merging, you know, that we should become one union and everything

because that was, we understood, the Civil Rights Laws and everything and that, there, that was no problem 'cause we had been working together for years and years so it didn't make any difference to all of a sudden...Officially one body as opposed to, you know, two locals, and we played together and, uh, when there was work, yeah. That's the later years. You can say now there's only a handful of them are, you know, uh, people are playing together, but that's, that's nothing to do with, uh, the two unions or anything merging and, uh, there just isn't any work. You go into the clubs and most of them are sound systems, what have you. The weddings and things are all sound systems.

Q: Hmm.

P: So, anyway the, the merger was, uh, proposal was presented to the, uh, body for, uh, ratification and obviously discussion from the Federation, proposing and pushing toward, you know, this agreement that they had talked about. Because in our only few meetings that the new board attended, we weren't able to, uh, other than protesting, you know, what they were negotiating, we felt it wasn't necessary to have so many officers and the salaries and everything with the amount of work that was, uh, in existence at the time. And, uh, as it came _____, I think I probably made one of my most famous speeches, I guess, effective speeches, of the, my sort of political career, if you want to call it a political career. I never looked at it as that. I looked at it as something that I wanted to do to better the life of the musicians, you know, involved, black or white or whatever. 'Cause I had proposed at the very beginning, very much in '68 that we not have all these surrounding locals that do exist today, but I was not successful at merging all of those. There should have been a Western New York local, but that never came about. So, I suggested to the membership that they vote unanimously to vote this, uh, proposal down and allow our new members a chance to see what they can work out as far as getting something that we can all live with, and then, that's what they did. So that was the famous Statler Meeting.

Q: Can you tell me a little bit about, uh, the plan that you eventually did work out. I mean, not so much the, the precepts of the plan, because we, you know, I have those in print, and I understand those. But, uh, how the negotiations went [Tape Indescribable].

P: Well, the majority of them, the majority of it is, uh, that was resolved that, uh, was acceptable to, uh, our

new board, executive board is, is what you really see as the merger plan itself.

Q: How did 533 feel about that? Did they...

P: Well, uh...

Q: Were they made to go along with it? Did they finally compromise to, uh...

P: Yeah, they were part of the, you know, the negotiations that happened after that meeting, voted everything down, and that means go back to the drawing board. You know, come up with proposals. And, uh, and, uh, they eventually agreed to it. You know, they did and so did our membership and our recommendation.

Q: In reading the minutes, you, you get the perception that the merger plan wasn't all ratified by the Locals, 43 and 533, that it was pretty much a mandate given and presented by the AFL, "Hey, look. This is the way you're going to do it. Since you guys can't agree on the conditions of the band, this is it."

P: No, we had to vote on it. There's no way that they could mandate anything. That was voted on by both bodies.

Q: I see.

P: 533 and...

Q: I'm glad you cleared that up.

P: ...the Local 43. _____ by the law. This is one of the things I said, they cannot force...

Q: Uh huh.

P: ...any conditions of this merger plan on us without us accepting. And when it was modified down to what we thought made more sense, you know, like there were salaries involved, yet excessive salaries, that of the number of people involved, but that was to give the Local 533 a chance for these officers to get known to the whole membership, which was 92 at that time. As it turned out, uh, successive years after that, these people didn't choose to run, want to run. There was one that I was, uh, very much in favor of, and I couldn't convince him, and he was a good friend of mine, still is, Jimmy Legge.

Q: I talked with him.

- P: Jimmy is, uh, uh, would have been an excellent officer, but he chose not to run. I couldn't convince him to run. He had my support.
- Q: Hmm.
- P: I don't know what he says words were, what he is, uh, but, uh...
- Q: Hmm. Backtracking a little bit...You became a member of the Union in the '40s. Can you tell me a little bit about the relationship that you had with 533. You touched on it a little bit, but, you know, there was some mixing, you played together sometimes. Tell me about some of those memories. Tell me names, places, whatever you can remember.
- P: Well, uh, there were a few, uh, jazz clubs, ah. The Moonglow had shows. Called Moonglow, was the biggest, uh, black club that...in town for many years, where they had music, they had a band, and they had, uh, ah, shows, you know. But, there was, I think, the Zanzibar on Williams Street. Some of the names, I haven't recalled. That was a place where jazz was played, and both blacks and whites played. I played down there a few times. Bafo's down on Main and Tupper, downtown, was a, was a place where we all played together.
- Q: Were these temporary engagements? Yeah, there was nothing steady?
- P: Yeah, there was nothing steady. There was, there was never anything steady. Music, you worked, and then when the owner got tired of the group and wanted to change, he would change.
- Q: I see.
- P: The Anchor Bar was another place. They had both blacks and whites, and more black groups played there than white group did through the years. In fact, I think right today there's a mixed that's playing in there. So, you know, there were mixture of, uh, half dozen of these clubs. Places like Hemingways now and, uh, those places didn't exist in those days. Pearl Street, Garveys, those, they weren't even there.
- Q: Do you remember some of the, uh, musicians from 533 that you played with?

- P: Well, I played with Georgie Clark, he moved to New York, and Kenny Copeland, passed away some years back there. Alvin Shepard.
- Q: I've heard of him.
- P: Yeah. In fact he worked with my Young Audience group for five years. When we had in the schools we use to do an educational jazz program in the schools. Alvin was part of that group.
- Q: Uh huh.
- P: And, uh, Benny Johnson was a great piano player, jazz piano player that played for years. Most of these people are dead today, because they were quite a bit older than me at that time.
- Q: Did you ever go down to the Club? Colored Musicians' Club?
- P: I've been there through the years, yeah. Played there a few times. Rehearsed with band [Tape Indescribable]. I don't, uh, frequent them very much right now. Uh, I don't frequent any place much right now.
- Q: So to describe the relationship that 43 and 533 had...Did you step on each others toes as far as policing the jurisdiction? Was anybody being undercut?
- P: No, they, they could be, uh...
- Q: Competition?
- P: The, uh, Perry Grey, who was the president at the time of 533 during the merger and the merger discussions, became vice president and, or, or they had a, I don't know exactly what the, uh, hold different title than just vice president. I think we had two vice president. We had two secretary's. And Perry and our president, at the time, were business agents, too. They went out and policed the area. We got along fine. I use to go drinking with, uh, with Willie Dorsey, Jimmy Legge, Perry Grey, and I. The four of us, after each board meeting, we'd fight like dogs at the, at the meeting. You know, for whatever we believed in, but that had nothing to do with black or white or anything. But we went, you know, we worked together, went out afterwards, and had lunch.
- Q: Hmm.
- P: No problems, and that was it.

- Q: Hmm. They mentioned about the corporation, the Colored Musicians' Club. I've heard that, uh, maybe some of 43's membership felt that as a part of the merger, that, uh, the Club would be part of the deal.
- P: That was never told to them that, that would be part of the deal.
- Q: Uh huh.
- P: That was never told to any member. If they assumed that on their own that they were, you know, just misinformed, or they misunderstood, or they misunderstood, or they didn't understand. You know, like the... Well, it's those of us that were, uh, involved in the, in the, in the, uh, negotiations did research and, indeed, it was a separate entity from 533. No doubt about it. There's a lot that probably still believe today that, that probably should have belonged to, you know, to, to the merged union, but it was a separate organization. Maybe they, for whatever reason, but, uh, there were some 50 or 75. Their, their local was only about 100 when we merged, 100 member, and most of them were part of the corporation, of this Colored Musicians' Club.
- Q: Uh huh.
- P: And those people, members of 43, that thought they were, were not informed or they didn't really take the time to research. We did, you know, as officers...being, trying to be responsible officers.
- Q: Hmm. So now you have Local 92 of the American Federation of Musicians. Tell me a little bit about it. Was it better because it merged? Ah, you got the two unions merged because. You know, you think about it, and this is something that, uh, I thought about. You got the Civil Rights Act in '64, you got some unions merging prior to that like Chicago, and then you got mergers going on through the '60s. Why did it take, uh, 533 and 43 so long to...
- P: Oh, there were many locals that, that were separate entities and we never even thought about it as that because we had a good relationship together. It wasn't...
- Q: No big deal?
- P: No it was no big deal. We played together. After we merged, those that played together, those that could play

jazz, played together, those that couldn't play jazz, didn't play...

Q: Uh huh.

P: ...together. That's with, with the blacks or whites and that was it. I...We never...Uh, It was never entered into us because we weren't discriminating. If you like, there was a black saxophone player, there's something as an example, there's a great player. Everybody wanted to play with him, that's all. And that's the same way with them. If there was a white jazz player that was good, they would, they would, uh, play with the, you know, with the blacks, and the blacks would seek them out.

Q: Hmm.

P: So I don't think that there was such a, a big deal merging them, you know like of the two unions, other than the fact that was the law, you know, the government law of the land that we should not be segregated.

Q: Hmm.

P: So we tried our best to merge and became, you know, one local, but, uh, things didn't get better by the merger. In fact, they were getting worse as the business deteriorated. There were laws, like the Taft Hartley Law, which was, uh, definitely discriminating against musicians. We're still trying to repeal it and...

Q: Please tell me a little bit about it, Taft Hartley?

P: Those, those...

Q: Hold on one second, sir [End of tape's side one] Taft Hartley Act...

P: The Taft Hartley Act forbid us to negotiate with, uh, with, uh, examples, like we had bands in the radio stations, and they were immediately fired, laid off once this act went into being and things. And we...It was illegal for us to, to negotiate. It was illegal for us to strike, and it still is. That's why their, you know...

Q: 'Cause of the Taft Hartley Act? Is there any other legislation that...

P: Well, the Labor Management Act, you know, which was, uh, uh, effected us more so than any other, ah...

Q: What year did that take affect, the Labor Management Act?

P: Well, I think that, that was happening, I think in the '60s...No 1958, Labor Management Act of 1958.

Q: What, what did it...

P: Well, it, it forbid us to, to be able to negotiate. It's, it's similar to, like the Taylor Law in New York State, where your teachers can't strike, and so forth. We can't...We couldn't put pickets up in front of, uh, uh, uh, example, uh, ah, banquet room, or something, banquet hall because it's against the, the, uh, Labor Management Act against the Taft Hartley because they were, uh, ah, uh, the owners of that place. If they rented out to somebody who was going to have a wedding, or something, they were the employer. We had no grounds to go against them, we couldn't strike against them. The radio stations didn't want to have them. Music, we had stand-by bands and things like that in the, uh, theaters. That was thrown out because it was found to be illegal, and we couldn't have standbys. People ready, willing, and able to work, and they had, you know, then they would say, 'Well, we don't have employment for anyone' and that's it, that was it. Now those kind of things is what deteriorated the American Federation of Musicians on a national level, which had nothing to do with the mergers or anything else.

Q: Or race?

P: Oh, of course not. Ah, 'cause the blacks lost work as well as the whites.

Q: So it's not about racism. It's not about cliques. Cliques in 92? You were on the Executive Board.

P: [Tape Indescribable]

Q: In fact, you were, you were president weren't you of 92 for six years?

P: Yes, sure.

Q: What years?

P: Well, up until, uh, what is this, '94? I finished in '93.

Q: You were president of...

P: Yeah.

Q: ...local union.

P: Yeah, vice president since the 70s then I became president for six years. And then I chose not to seek re-el, re-election.

Q: So the union...

P: But the, but the head had nothing whatsoever...I mean, you can read your International Musician and things, and you can read about Nate, Nate Guthrie and with his efforts to get that, that power out, get that, uh, you know, to get those things repealed, you know, and they keep getting a Congressman here, a Senator there, and were close, but we can't get these things repealed or modified.

Q: So the Union doesn't have any power anymore?

P: Not really, no. And that's what happened to us. If the government just legislated these laws that seemed to effect us more so than most other labor unions. And that took the clout away from the American Federation of Musicians, and that's why the, they, in the what, how many years now, the, uh, maybe ten or fifteen years, we've, uh, we've declined from over 300,000 some members to maybe 140, 150,000 members now.

Q: Is that right?

P: And it's because we have no right to go to try to, uh, police, uh, a banquet hall. And there can be a non-union band working there and there can be a record machine replacing our people, and non-union band, and we can't do anything about getting, uh, the union, non-union bands out of there or anything else because it's illegal.

Q: So you're sunk?

P: Yep, that's, that's what happened to the music business. Not only, had nothing to do with the merger of anything.

Q: Hmm.

P: Absolutely nothing.

Q: Hmm.

P: So, on the business end...American Federation of Musicians' still declining. They're bankrupt, the whole country music business in the country is all declining. So you keep increasing work dues and things, you know,

and, uh, assessments and whatever have you. That's what the heavy convention that the AF of M has, and that's what their doing. It's, it's increasing the per capita that we have to pay on each member to the Federation, and you have to pass that along to its members as it increases for the Federation itself to stay alive. So I don't think we have anything to say about the, to blame anybody. Can blame the fact that the Civil Rights Law made us merge, and so forth, you know. That had nothing, nothing to do with it. The decline of the business itself is what made everything deteriorate.

Q: Hmm. Sad story.

P: Yeah it's sad. (How it's sad.) As you see what's happening, uh, the support is not there for music--even for the Buffalo Philharmonic. We can't, they can't exist. They can't pay our salaries so they, uh, send everybody home.

Q: And you've been playing with the Philharmonic for how many years now?

P: Well, if sort of, whatever this year ended up being, I finished my 48th year.

Q: Playing bass with them, the Philharmonic. That's very disheartening. It is. Been out of work six weeks now.

P: Yeah. Yeah it's been six. We're suppose to have been the winter season as we call, it was suppose to have finished on the 12th of June. Then we were suppose to start our summer season around the 27th and go for another seven to nine weeks. I'm not sure exactly when, but that's all dead since they served notice that they can't, uh, maintain the orchestra. They can't pay our salaries and that was it. They dissolved the orchestra. That's really what's happened.

Q: Wow. Is there anything else that you'd like to add in recollection?

P: Well, that's, not really, you know. They, uh, I mean I could comment on what were on the minutes and things if I saw the minutes, but I haven't seen minutes in, what '68, now we're talking, what, uh, ... _____ was 20 some years, 26, 28 years.

Q: It's been a long time.

P: Yeah. So I, uh...The basic thing was, I repeat myself, is, uh, I think at that time was the, the membership of

their excessive salaries, and it wasn't going to improve their conditions, work conditions, for either group, and, uh, the fact that they were going to put this work dues in, and nobody wants to pay taxes. You know how people rebel against taxes. I mean _____ were probably doing it already.

Q: Sure.

P: [Tape Indescribable] starting in the work force.

Q: Their eating you up.

P: Sure.

Q: Pour a little money on, uh...

P: Yeah.

Q: ...as a graduate student.

P: That's right, and it's...They can't call it a tax, but it basically is a tax. It goes on your earnings, you know.

One of the arguments were, "Well, if you got the ability to work, you should have, you should pay the taxes," but that's, I don't, I don't buy that. Wouldn't you like to take some of that money home, you know.

Q: Sure, sure.

P: That's, uh, about all that I recollect as far, you know, like if I had seen any other things that other people have said, maybe I can comment on it whether it's...

Q: [Tape Indescribable]

P: ...truthfully as it's, uh, it's, not if it's truth, but, you know, whether if it's an actual fact...

Q: Uh huh.

P: ...that happened, but, uh...

Q: Uh huh. I've mentioned, uh, in the course of our conversation, I've mentioned several things that, uh, in discussing this topic with, with other folks [Tape Indescribable] controversial, uh, pieces of this whole puzzle. So I've brought them up, and, and, you...Cliques, the Colored Musicians' Club, racism, uh, the competition between the union, uh, things like that, and you've addressed them all. Uh, so in the course of

our, of our discussion, we've, we've dealt with a lot of things, and...

P: That's pretty much basically what it is , uh, what you've gotten from other sources, I don't know. Again, I can't comment.

Q: Well, it was very similar, which adds more power to the whole story, actually. So, uh...

P: 'Cause I, I don't know, you know, that there could be individuals that had a personal feeling [Tape Indescribable]

Q: People remember what they want to remember.

P: Yeah, that's right.

Q: That's one thing that, uh, I have to keep in mind in interviewing people, uh, remember what they want to remember. Their recollections are selective, and they always remember everything. We're talking about a long time ago.

P: Yeah, yeah. Like I said, I...

Q: ...as well.

P: I wouldn't mind seeing those minutes myself to see whether, what they had written down. I don't think we're ever getting, individually...Though we're the negotiating teams, uh, I don't think we were individually ever getting minutes, set of minutes. This, this is what was discussed at the thing because the American Federation of Musicians were the people running the meetings, and it was their obligation to take accurate minutes.

Q: Well, were you all happy with, uh, , you know, national intervention? How do you feel about that? I, I get the feeling that the...They weren't, uh...You know, they didn't appreciate it.

P: Well, they, they, uh...I have the, I have the feeling, I know for a fact, that, uh, they pretty much were down on me because I was effective representing my membership, doing what I thought at the time was in the best interest of the people that elected me to office. And they...

Q: Yours?

- P: ...the...they're...they...To this day, at conventions, when I was president, went to the conventions and things, they, they, uh, members, some of them were, were friendly and others weren't. I've been a marked with the Federation, in the Federation's eyes, because they couldn't really control me _____ and push me like a button, you know, like they like to do with everybody, you know. Because in the, in the final analysis, where the only way they could push me around is when they say, "Here's a whole bunch of jobs, Frank, give them to your musicians and things like that." They never did that. They weren't capable of doing that so, I mean, I had to be, uh, ah, doing what I had to do because we lost an awful lot of members because of the decisions that were made by the Federation.
- Q: Uh huh. That's it.
- P: Well, that's...
- Q: That's it.
- P: ...that's about it, yeah.
- Q: Been a good visit.
- P: Yeah. I had, I mean that's basically, you know, around the thing. Like I say, if I could comment, if I had the minutes or statements other people made, but I, I don't think that's probably necessary to do that, but if you want to do that in your writings, you know, just say, "Well, that's not really the way it happened."
- Q:: Uh huh.
- P: The way it went, [Tape Indescribable].
- Q: As I said before, uh, a lot of the things that we've discussed have been parallel to what James Legge, Willie Dorsey...
- P: Right.
- Q: Les Davis, Connie Toepffer, Dick Riederer, Ange Callea, all these folks. I've _____ talked to, to over a dozen. Uh, people on both sides, and you've added power to the story, and there are a lot of things that you've said that reinforce what other people said.
- P: Yeah, they, uh, those, uh, people like Riederer and Callea were not there in the negotiations, they weren't, uh, they weren't officers or anything. They weren't in

on the negotiations. They were at the meetings, obviously...

Q: Yes.

P: ...because their, their well-being and their future was at stake, uh, in a sense, so they certainly had an interest in it. And there was enough work at that time where people were more interested in the development than they are today. It's our membership. Its declined...

Q: One of the last things that I wanted to ask you was, you mentioned this before, after the merger it didn't seem like 533 took much of an interest in the new union, um, as one body. Was it because, you know, your perception, they felt swallowed up. They didn't have a voice anymore because they were out represented, or was it because of the work thing that you've been talking about. Uh...

P: Well, I think, basically, most of it was the work situation, and it, and they certainly felt because they...I don't know exactly what the numbers were of our membership at the time, but maybe I would say in the area of 13 or 1,500 members as opposed to 100. That's all they were, [Tape Indescribable] and they certainly felt that way, but, uh, I know for a fact that, and, uh, that I had begged, practically begged, Jimmy Legge to run, you know, for, for office. And he had my support and everything, and which I could have, at the time, got him the Philharmonic support, through votes and stuff, and he chose not to run.

Q: Did he tell you why? Did he ever tell you why?

P: No, I don't, at least I don't recall exactly what he told me--why that he didn't want to.

Q: Hmm. Do you ever...

P: We felt that he definitely had as good a chance as anybody at being successful in, in, you know, in the election 'cause there were other people that would have supported him, not only just me.

Q: I've heard that before. He has a lot of respect from his peers.

P: Yeah. Sure he does.

Q: Good man.

P: Yep. That was a sad day for it when he didn't choose to run, you know, but he had his reasons, and I only had to... He'd be the one to tell you what his reasons were.

Q: I visited with him, and I just might visit with him again because as you are aware, I'm sure, that he's had some health problems.

P: Yeah, yeah, I heard that, yeah...

Q: Sure.

P: And, in fact, when I saw you, talked to you last time, you had not been able to get to talk to him so you must have talked to him since.

Q: Good talk. Yeah, finally. I think he's a little self conscious about his, his, uh, you know, expressing himself, but we had a terrific visit, and we talked for over an hour, and, uh, just went great. And I think that he, that, I think he wants to visit again so we're going to do that before I rap things up this summer because I've, I've got to get this thing, uh, in print, all of it, and bound and signed and get myself to Albany.

P: Sure.

Q: They're expecting me in August. So I, I want to thank you for your time and hospitality...

P: Well, I'm glad to be [Tape Indescribable]...

Q: ...your memories.

P: ...help I've been.

Q: You've been a...

P: And, like I say, I don't recall everything. I mean, I do recall, you know. There were certainly, uh, a lot of infighting going on between, particularly myself because [Tape Indescribable] probably one of the most outspoken of the people that were willing to stand out and speak out as to what they felt would be the fair thing for everybody concerned.

Q: Uh huh.